

Preface

The Veterans Health Administration's (VHA's) Research and Development Program has long been recognized as a key asset in VA's efforts to improve the health of America's veterans. Its accomplishments are many and varied. Not as well recognized, however, is the fact that VHA's R&D program also benefits all other Americans. Indeed, many modern medical technologies or procedures have their roots in the VA, either because they were pioneered or developed by VA investigators. Unquestionably, VHA's Research and Development Program is a leader in the world of medical science today.

The veterans healthcare system in which VA research takes place is the largest fully integrated healthcare system in the United States, having over 1,100 sites of care delivery located in each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam and the Philippines. More than 3.1 million people get treated at VA facilities each year. In addition, VA is the largest provider of healthcare professional training in the nation, providing clinical experience to some 110,000 trainees each year from over 1,200 colleges and universities from throughout the nation.

To assist understanding VHA's myriad research assets, this catalog has been compiled to provide a glimpse of the many VA R&D centers, career development programs, funding sources and investigative initiatives. On reviewing these, I believe you will get a sense of the many exciting opportunities that exist in VHA's Research and Development Program today.



Kenneth W. Kizer, M.D., M.P.H.

Kenneth W. Kizer, M.D., M.P.H.
Under Secretary for Health
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Introduction

When VA researchers created the “VA Seattle Foot” in 1985, they also started a revolution in the field of prosthetics. The development of the below-the-knee prosthesis gave medical scientists a better understanding of how technologies could help amputees and other individuals with major physical disabilities. Meanwhile, amputees, who were now able to walk and run with great ease, gained more than a foot. They gained independence, and thus, a better quality of life.

Like many medical science creations developed by VA’s Office of Research and Development—such as the cardiac pacemaker and the CT scan—this innovation changed thousands of lives worldwide.

Such are the cornerstones of what the work of the VA Office of Research and Development is all about: a strategic process that emphasizes clinical, health services and rehabilitation research, and research education in order to improve health care for veterans and non-veterans alike.

Over the years, the Office of Research and Development has made this process a priority, and most recently has embarked on a major initiative to refine that effort by integrating research activities among the four research services—Cooperative Studies, Health Services Research and Development, Medical Research, and Rehabilitation Research and Development.

Armed with expert investigators, clinical and biomedical, the Office of Research and Development can point to significant strides in this effort to address some of the most challenging health care issues for veterans and for the broader health care community today. Among them are investigations involving Parkinson’s disease, prostate disease, Gulf War illnesses, AIDS, stroke and cancer treatment, and post-traumatic stress disorder, to name a few. The Health Services Research and Development Service is looking at a number of important system issues including the effect of managed care on patient outcomes as well as quality and cost issues.

Through its Career Development programs, the Office of Research and Development is also carrying out a commitment to boost the recruitment, training, and retention of expert investigators. Specific initiatives include the creation of a Career Development program in Rehabilitation Research and Development Service for disability research and the establishment of a Pre-Doctoral Fellowship program.

Collaborative arrangements with other government agencies and with non-government entities further enhance VA research. For example, the VA



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Office of Research and Development is collaborating with the Department of Defense (DoD) to study new diagnostic and treatment capabilities for prostate disease. The Office and its Cooperative Studies Program is also working with DoD and the Department of Health and Human Services to explore medical and psychosocial conditions among Persian Gulf War veterans. The VA and the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation (JDF) are jointly funding the VA- JDF's Diabetes Research Centers to study Type I and Type II diabetes, particularly clinical complications associated with the disease.

Other key collaborators include public and private partners such as the National Institute on Aging, the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research, Astra Merck and Marion Merrell Dow.

These links across various federal agencies, with the private sector, with other VA offices and within

the Office of Research and Development itself, demonstrate a commitment to VA-sponsored research and a recognition of its impact on the health of veterans, non-veterans, and the scientific community at large.

Certainly the VA Office of Research and Development's hallmark research infrastructure made up of the four core Services can support future initiatives that will also withstand the influence of a changing health care marketplace. We hope this Research and Development catalog will keep you informed of our work as we make that journey.

John R. Feussner, M.D.
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VA Office of Research and Development: An Overview

The Office of Research and Development aspires to lead the Veterans Health Administration in providing unequaled health care value to veterans. That endeavor is made ever greater—and challenged by—the changing dynamics of health-care, which is always evolving as consumers demand quality for their dollar, and medical technology leaps ahead of our capacity to manage it.

Today's VA retains a strong, credible foothold in this fast changing environment through the work of the four Research Services that comprise its Office of Research and Development:

Cooperative Studies Program
Medical Research Service
Health Services Research and Development Service
Rehabilitation Research and Development Service

Each Service oversees a number of world renowned research centers nationwide. The Office of Research and Development is like a major “wheel” of research, and the four Services are its “spokes.”

This catalog chronicles the major research work of each Service, details their many collaborations, and

describes the Office of Research and Development's newest initiatives. Many of the new initiatives you'll read about in this catalog are an outgrowth of the Research Realignment Advisory Committee (RRAC). Created in 1996 by then VA Secretary Jesse Brown, the RRAC assessed the VA's research efforts, which then led to the launch of a number of new initiatives, including the establishment of Designated Research Areas (DRAs). DRAs are areas of particular importance to VA because of uniqueness or prevalence in the VA patient population or to healthcare delivery within VA.

Of course, at the heart of the VA's research efforts are the many men and women, clinical and non-clinical, who commit their time and energy to transforming medical science and healthcare research into an improved quality of life for our nation's veterans. In this catalog you'll find the names and phone numbers of key Research contacts for more information.

The Office of Research and Development is proud to publish this first-ever catalog describing its innovations in improving health care for veterans.

We welcome your comments and suggestions.

Building Bridges, Connecting Lives: Cooperative Studies Program

John R. Feussner, M.D. , Chief
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In the 1940s, when 10,000 veterans suffered from tuberculosis, researchers enrolled them in VA studies to evaluate drugs for treating the disease. Thus, the first Cooperative Study was born. Since then, this effort, now known as the Cooperative Studies Program (CSP), has grown to become a major clinical research activity that, as one of its goals, encourages and supports VA investigators to conduct clinical research and data collection across selected research facilities.

Today CSP uncovers definitive findings that have a direct impact on veterans' clinical care. These multi-center study efforts provide a natural resource to the VA health care community and beyond. Moreover, the size and scope of the

Veterans Health Administration makes it an exceptional laboratory for conducting such large scale clinical trials.

CSP itself has a structure that provides the framework for clinical trials. The Program allows for flexible proposal development by investigators that is supported by an extensive network of professional biostatisticians, health economists, pharmacists, programmers, administrators, and support staff within CSP.

Specifically, the CSP is made up of four Coordinating Centers, a Clinical Research Pharmacy, and three Epidemiological Research and Information Centers. Within this structure, the CSP aims to:

- conduct clinical research on health issues that are vital to our nation's veterans;
- define research results that establish new standards of care and improve veterans' health;
- improve the efficiency of the VA health care system; and
- improve the health of the population as a whole.

With this mission in mind, the CSP can organize research involving multiple medical centers within VHA and reap greater benefits than can be achieved from a single site study.





COORDINATING CENTERS AND THE PHARMACY

Funded by the Office of Research and Development, the Coordinating Centers ensure that large clinical trials are scientifically sound as well as cost effective. The program's reach is extensive, with CSP annually overseeing some 60 cooperative studies at any one time; these studies are usually conducted over a 5-year period. VA CSP Headquarters assigns studies to Coordinating Centers, which in turn provide statistical and methodological guidance to VA investigators conducting clinical trials.

Contact the following Cooperative Studies Program Coordinating Centers for more information:

VA Medical Center, Hines, Illinois
Director: William G. Henderson, Ph.D.
Telephone: (708) 343-7200 *Fax:* (708) 216-2116
e-mail: henderson@research.hines.med.va.gov

VA Medical Center, Palo Alto, California
Director: Philip W. Lavori, Ph.D.
Telephone: (650) 617-2719 *Fax:* (650) 617-2690
e-mail: Lavori@mailsr.icon.palo-alto.med.va.gov or
Lavori@odd.stanford.edu

VA Medical Center, Perry Point, Maryland
Director: Joseph F. Collins, Sc.D.
Telephone: (410) 642-1007 *Fax:* (410) 642-1129
e-mail: Collins.Joseph_F@Baltimore.va.gov

VA Medical Center, West Haven, Connecticut
Acting Director: Peter Peduzzi, Ph.D.
Telephone: (203) 937-3440 *Fax:* (203) 937-3858
e-mail: Peduzzi.Peter@West-Haven.va.gov

CSP also supports a Clinical Research Pharmacy to coordinate studies that involve drugs or medical devices. The pharmacy contact information follows.

VA Medical Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico
Director: Mike R. Sather, M.S., F.A.S.H.P.
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EPIDEMIOLOGY RESEARCH AND INFORMATION CENTERS

Epidemiology—the study of the incidence, distribution and control of disease in a population—is well suited for exploring chronic diseases among various subgroups of veterans. The three Epidemiological Research and Information Centers (ERICs), do just that, by linking the epidemiology of medical care with actual clinical practice. These Centers' primary mission is to enhance VA health care delivery by promoting VA-based population research and to convert those results into a format that VHA providers and administrators can apply to improve patient care. Below are brief descriptions of the three ERICs.

MASSACHUSETTS VETERANS EPIDEMIOLOGY RESEARCH & INFORMATION CENTER (MAVERIC)

MAVERIC's primary focus is chronic disease epidemiology. Current projects focus on cardiovascular disease, cancer, pulmonary disease, mental health, hematology, gastrointestinal disease, hypertension, diabetes and genetics.

MAVERIC investigators work closely with several major Boston area institutions to create expertise in

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all aspects of population-based research, develop databases to link and promote epidemiologic research, and train young and established investigators in this arena.

The Center offers expertise in population-based study design, implementation, and statistical analysis, and maintains a wealth of resources for investigators, from funding and educational opportunities to consultant services and blood storage capabilities. Moreover, the incorporation of two ongoing studies, the VA Normative Aging Study and the VA Dental Longitudinal Study, offer new opportunities for advancing the growth of the Center and provide MAVERIC with a means to launch exciting educational and research initiatives.

MAVERIC collaborating or supporting institutions include:

- Boston VA Medical Center
- Harvard School of Public Health
- Harvard Medical School
- Boston University School of Public Health
- Boston University School of Medicine
- Brigham and Women's Hospital

New MAVERIC collaborators include the Department of Defense and the Joslin Diabetes Clinic, and soon, Boston VA fellowships in Informatics and Internal Medicine. Among the primary goals of this latter group will be the creation of a Center for Pharmaco-epidemiology within VA.

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West Roxbury, Massachusetts

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*CENTER FOR VETERAN-FOCUSED PRIORITY
EPIDEMIOLOGIC RESEARCH AND SUPPORT AT
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA*

The Durham ERIC focuses on conducting, generating, and disseminating high-quality epidemiological information on the natural history and clinical course of chronic diseases and other high priority health conditions. The Durham Center emphasizes interventions and their evaluations, and will soon be designing education and training opportunities to develop and enhance epidemiological technical expertise.

The Durham Center also educates VA health professionals in epidemiologic methods and offers fellowships and visiting professorships. To carry out its many activities, the Durham ERIC links with the Center for Health Services Research in Primary Care also located at the Durham VA Medical Center.

Other collaborators and supporting institutions include Duke University and the University of North Carolina, the local Veterans Integrated Service Network, the VA National Center for

Health Promotion, the VA National Performance Data Research Center, and the other ERICs in Boston and Seattle.

The Center's research portfolio includes studies on risk factors for advanced colorectal cancer in veterans; impact of diabetic patients' psychological health and course of disease; seroprevalence and risks in veterans with severe mental illness; and genetic and other risk factors for prostate cancer.

Studies of colorectal cancer, risk factors for prostate cancer, and severely mentally ill veterans, are all "sister" studies of studies funded by the National Cancer Institute and the National Institute of Mental Health. Future research will focus on the epidemiology and outcomes of stroke-related dysphagia and periodontal disease as a risk factor for stroke among elderly veterans.

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email: ronnie.horner@duke.edu

Deputy Director: Eugene Z. Oddone, M.D., M.H.Sc.

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SEATTLE EPIDEMIOLOGIC RESEARCH AND INFORMATION CENTER (SERIC)

In Seattle, investigators are focusing on improving veterans' health and health care by promoting the principles and practice of state-of-the-art epidemiologic research within VA. Specifically, ERIC staff are refining VA and non-VA data collection efforts on the frequency of health conditions and risk factors; conducting hypothesis-driven research projects; teaching introductory and advanced epidemiology methods to VA administrators, clinicians and investigators; and broadly disseminating epidemiologic information.

The Center represents a collaboration between the VA Puget Sound Health Care System and the Department of Epidemiology at the University of Washington School of Public Health and Community Medicine. Current studies focus on carotid artery disease; magnetic resonance abnormalities and back pain risk; risk factors for nosocomial urinary tract infection; and abdominal aortic aneurysm. SERIC also collaborates with other funding sources on two studies of footwear and foot ulcer risk for patients with diabetes.

Director: Edward Boyko, M.D., M.P.H.

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Creating New Knowledge: Health Services Research and Development Service

John G. Demakis, Director
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The Health Services Research and Development Service (HSR&D) pursues research at the interface of health care systems, patients and health care outcomes. HSR&D underscores all aspects of VA health care; specifically quality, access, patient outcomes and health care costs. The HSR&D mission is to advance knowledge and promote innovations that improve the health and care of veterans and the nation. Many of the studies conducted by this Service have been used within and outside VA to assess new technologies, explore strategies for improving health outcomes, and evaluate the cost-effectiveness of services and therapies.

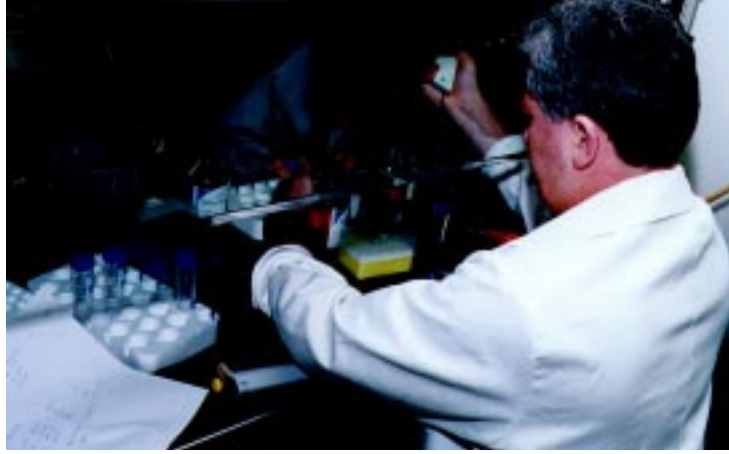
The need for high quality health services research continues to grow to keep pace with and respond to the rapid changes underway within the Veterans Health Administration and in the health care community as a whole. HSR&D carries out this mission through peer reviewed research and through its key centers:

- eleven Centers of Excellence;
- the Management Decision and Research Center; and
- the Veterans Affairs Information Resource Center

HSR&D CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

HSR&D Centers of Excellence support the integration of research and practice, linking the clinical aspects of patient care and organizational/management needs through a core of VA staff at selected medical centers nationwide. Each Center develops its own research agenda, is hosted by a collaborating VA Medical Center, and maintains affiliations with community institutes—schools of public health, university health administration programs, and research institutes—to support its goals and objectives. Below are brief descriptions of all current HSR&D Centers of Excellence.





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*CENTER FOR PRACTICE MANAGEMENT &
OUTCOMES RESEARCH
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN*

Investigators at this Center conduct research that promotes optimal management of resource-intensive care for the nation's veterans. Research priority areas include: quality monitoring and improvement, outcome evaluation of alternative treatments, practice and outcomes variations, resource allocation, and shared decision-making.

Center investigators and associate investigators possess a wide range of research skills and expertise in disciplines such as: biostatistics, database management, computer programming, decision analysis, guideline development and dissemination, organizational behavior, outcomes and effectiveness research, provider profiling, psychometrics, quality measurement and improvement, resource allocation, simulation analysis, and survey research. The Center is located at the Ann Arbor VA Medical Center and has close ties with the University of Michigan Schools of Medicine and Public Health.

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*CENTER FOR HEALTH QUALITY,
OUTCOMES, AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH
BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS*

This Center's investigators focus on research to improve the quality of care that veterans receive and the efficiency with which that care is provided. Primary research areas include: health economics, productivity measurement, quality assessment in ambulatory and long term care, health outcomes measurement, case-mix measurement, cost effectiveness analysis, and decision analysis.

A collaboration with the Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital, the Center is academically linked with Boston University, including the Boston University School of Public Health and the Boston University Department of Medicine's Section of General Internal Medicine.

Director: Mark Prashker, M.D., M.P.H.
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*CENTER FOR HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH
IN PRIMARY CARE
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA*

This Center's objective is to develop system-wide strategies that enhance the delivery, quality, and efficiency of primary care for veterans. Researchers carry out these efforts through an array of research and teaching programs in such areas as ambulatory care, women's health, geriatrics, and the epidemiology of chronic disease.

The Center continues to pioneer VA cooperative studies that focus on research designs for health care delivery topics and on the application of clinical trial methods. The Center's staff has a broad range of expertise, from managed care and generalist care, to hospice and palliative care, including: health care access, health care processes and outcome quality in primary care, generalist-specialist differences in the provision of health care, addictive substance research, and patient preferences for advance directives.

A collaboration with the Durham VA Medical Center, the Center is academically affiliated with Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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e-mail: Oddone.Eugene@durham.va.gov

*MIDWEST CENTER FOR HEALTH SERVICES
AND POLICY RESEARCH
HINES, ILLINOIS*

Researchers at the Midwest Center focus on health systems research and chronic diseases. Primary research areas include: long-term care/geriatrics, quality assurance, cost-effectiveness, women's health, substance abuse and utilization and access studies. The Center is affiliated with Northwestern University's Institute for Health Services Research and Policy Studies. Center staff have faculty appointments at Northwestern University, Loyola University of Chicago and the University of Illinois School of Public Health at Chicago.

Acting Director: Frances M. Weaver, Ph.D.
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*HOUSTON CENTER FOR QUALITY OF CARE
AND UTILIZATION STUDIES
HOUSTON, TEXAS*

Much of the work at the Houston Center focuses on quality of care assessments and on the study of the levels and determinants of veterans' utilization of health services. A distinctive feature of the Houston Center is its expertise in using large health care databases, both VA as well as non-VA, for health services research and management, earning it a national reputation in large database analysis both within and outside the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Houston Center is affiliated with Baylor College of Medicine as well as the University of Texas School of Public Health, Rice University, the Department of Sociology at the University of Houston, and Texas A&M University.

Director: Carol M. Ashton, M.D., M.P.H.
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*HSR&D CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTHCARE
AND OUTCOMES RESEARCH
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS*

Researchers at the Little Rock Center seek to improve mental health care within VA and nationwide, through the development, implementation, and dissemination of policy-relevant and clinically-relevant health services research. Research efforts encompass cognitive impairment, comorbidity, depression, schizophrenia and substance abuse as well as access to and utilization of mental health services, effectiveness and

outcomes of care, and costs and efficiency of care. Center investigators are nationally recognized for their expertise in measuring outcomes of patient care for mental and substance use disorders and for developing and validating disorder-specific instruments for outcomes measurement.

Located at the VA Medical Center in Little Rock, the Center collaborates with the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences' College of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, and College of Nursing.

Director: G. Richard Smith, M.D.
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*CENTER FOR CHRONIC DISEASE
OUTCOMES RESEARCH
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA*

Staff at the Center for Chronic Disease Outcomes strive to improve the delivery and accessibility of high quality, cost-effective health care for veterans with chronic disease. Specifically researchers work to define the health care interventions that improve outcomes for persons with chronic illness, carry out evidence-based practice for improved outcomes in chronic disease, and develop and evaluate innovative models for managing chronic disease within an integrated service network.

The Center collaborates with the Minneapolis VA Medical Center and the University of Minnesota.

Director: Hanna B. Rubins, M.D., M.P.H.
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*CENTER FOR HEALTH CARE EVALUATION
PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA*

The Palo Alto Center's research emphasizes five main areas: improving the organization and delivery of health care services; patient decision aids, screening procedures, and clinical decision-making; evaluation of treatment for substance abuse and psychiatric disorders; evaluation of treatment for older veterans; and health services research methodology. Center investigators are trained in health services, health economics, epidemiology, public health, evaluation research, social psychology, medical sociology, and biostatistics.

Located at the VA Medical Center in Palo Alto, the Center is affiliated with the Stanford University School of Medicine in Palo Alto, California, and additionally with the National Bureau of Economic Research, the Institute for Health Policy at the University of California, San Francisco, and the Center for Mental Health Services Research at the University of California, Berkeley.

Director: Rudolf H. Moos, Ph.D.
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(including Livermore) with participating
Sierra Pacific VISN VA Medical Centers in
Fresno, Reno, San Francisco and Northern
California System of Clinics
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*VETERANS EVIDENCE-BASED RESEARCH,
DISSEMINATION, AND IMPLEMENTATION CENTER
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS*

Research efforts at this Center seek to link research evidence with clinical practice by summarizing and translating the evidence into a useful document for various consumers, such as providers, patients, managers and policymakers.

The Center is a collaboration between the South Texas Veterans Health Care System and the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center in Charleston, South Carolina. Scientific partners include the VA Cochrane Center at San Antonio, and the Center for Health Care Research in Charleston based at the Medical University of South Carolina.

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*NORTHWEST CENTER FOR
OUTCOMES RESEARCH IN OLDER ADULTS
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON*

Researchers at the Northwest Center focus on the care of the aging veteran, ambulatory care, outcomes research, and disease prevention/health promotion. They also provide extensive technical assistance, consultation and education. The Center also sponsors training programs for postdoctoral fellows and predoctoral trainees.

The Northwest Center is a collaborative effort of the VA Puget Sound Health Care System and the Portland VA Medical Center. Major supporting community institutions include the University of Washington, the Center for Health Studies at Group Health Cooperative of Puget Sound and the Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Services Research in Portland.

Director: Stephan D. Fihn, M.D., M.P.H.
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*CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF HEALTHCARE
PROVIDER BEHAVIOR
SEPULVEDA, CALIFORNIA*

Improved understanding of what healthcare providers do and why they do it is critically important for efforts to guide the future of healthcare within and outside VA. For this reason, the Center seeks to build a knowledge base and framework that will help researchers, policy makers, healthcare providers and patients design and evaluate programs to improve the quality and economy of healthcare. Researchers specifically focus on provider behavior and practice patterns, health care quality and outcomes, quality improvement, clinical practice guideline implementation, and primary care/managed care evaluation. Providing technical assistance as well as training and education opportunities are also high priorities.

The Center is a collaboration among the Sepulveda, West Los Angeles and San Diego VA Medical Centers, and the RAND Health Sciences Program. Other affiliated institutions include the VA Employee Education System; Southwest area VA Medical Centers and outpatient clinics; and local community institutions including Cedars Sinai Medical Center, Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, Olive View Medical Center, and Jewish Homes for the Aging.

Director: Lisa V. Rubenstein, M.D., M.S.P.H.
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MANAGEMENT DECISION AND
RESEARCH CENTER
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

The Management Decision and Research Center (MDRC) acts as a bridge—essentially channeling information between VA health services research and management staff. Through its four interdependent programs in management consultation, information dissemination, management research, and technology assessment, the MDRC conducts, coordinates and disseminates research to inform policymakers and managers about organizational and managerial practices affecting the quality, cost, and accessibility of patient care.

MDRC staff have expertise in the areas of organizational management, program evaluation, policy analysis, strategic planning, health economics, information dissemination and technology assessment. Located at the Boston VA Medical Center, the MDRC is affiliated with the Boston University School of Public Health and the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute for Governmental Services.

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VA INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTER

Staff at the Veterans Affairs Information Resource Center (VIREC) assist HSR&D in making VA database information available to the research community within and outside the Service. VIREC provides information to researchers, managers and clinicians about the content, availability, reliability, validity, and accessibility of data sources within VA and for selected non-VA databases in support of health services research investigations.

Co-Directors: Denise M. Hynes, Ph.D. and
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Science In The Forefront: Medical Research Service

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Medical Research Service (MRS) could be considered among the most significant VA programs that reflects medical science innovation. The biomedical arm of the Office of Research and Development, MRS funds and administers research focusing on the etiology, pathogenesis, diagnosis, and treatment of a wide range of diseases and disorders affecting veterans.

It is the largest Service within the Office of Research and Development, with about 1,300 currently funded investigator-initiated projects totaling nearly \$135 million.

The primary goals of the Service are twofold: to support high quality biomedical research relevant to veterans' health care needs, and to develop and enhance an intramural research environment that promotes research while attracting and retaining productive research scientists.

The Service works to achieve these goals primarily through the Merit Review Program, the Service's principal mechanism for funding peer-reviewed biomedical research. Other major initiatives include the Minority Recruitment Initiative, the VA/DoD Collaborative Research Program, and Designated Research Centers.

MINORITY RECRUITMENT INITIATIVE

In an effort to address the health care needs of the nation's African American and Hispanic American veterans, strengthen the research skills of minority faculty scientists, and stimulate the interest of minority students in pursuing VA careers in biomedical and behavioral research, MRS created the Research Training Initiative for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs).

This Initiative has led to research collaborations between VA and these minority-serving academic institutions. Faculty and students may apply for Research Training Initiative awards for the support of training and collaborative research. Applicants are strongly encouraged to pursue research on medical problems prevalent among African Americans and Hispanic Americans.





VA/DoD COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAM

Another major collaboration within the Medical Research Service is the joint research effort by VA and Department of Defense (DoD) investigators. Shared research interests between the two federal departments initially prompted, and have since fueled, this VA/DoD Collaborative Research Program, which currently administers five initiatives:

- Prostate Diseases including Cancer;
- Military Operational Stress-related Illnesses;
- Mechanisms of Emerging Pathogens;
- Combat Casualty and Wound Repair; and
- Physiological Foundations of Physical Performance and Combat Readiness.

DESIGNATED RESEARCH CENTERS

In addition to the large number of investigator-initiated projects, the Medical Research Service supports Designated Research Centers where researchers study AIDS and HIV infection, schizophrenia, alcohol abuse, diabetes and environmental hazards. Besides their contributions to collaborative research, the Centers provide a structured training experience for junior investigators. Here's a look at each site:

Schizophrenia

Investigators at the three Schizophrenia Research Centers conduct basic research on the cause and treatment of schizophrenia.

Denver, Colorado: Researchers here are studying molecular biology and genetics, specifically, inherited sensory dysfunctions in schizophrenics, the mechanisms of the dysfunctions at the neuronal level, and genes responsible for the defects at the molecular level. The Center also supports a core molecular biology laboratory used for interdisciplinary studies of the neurobiology, genetics, and molecular biology of schizophrenia.

In 1997, researchers at the Center were responsible for the discovery of a gene that plays a major role in the development of schizophrenia. It is the first such gene to be found in a majority of families studied and has been linked to physiological defects commonly found in schizophrenics.

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West Haven, Connecticut: Originally emphasizing the clinical study of antipsychotic drugs in schizophrenia, the West Haven Center has expanded into other areas including schizophrenia pathophysiology, abnormal chemical transmission in the brain, cellular neuroscience, neuroimaging, and clinical drug trials that aim to improve treatment for patients with schizophrenia.

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Brockton, Massachusetts: Ongoing projects here are directed toward understanding the pathophysiology, clinical characteristics, and treatment of schizophrenia through a series of research projects including: an evaluation of the role stress plays in the pathophysiology of schizophrenia; brain tissue studies to evaluate glutamatergic transmission in schizophrenics; studies of the efficacy of d-cycloserine on treating the symptoms of schizophrenia; and a series of Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) projects to evaluate electrical activity in the brain.

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AIDS

Research on AIDS and HIV is conducted at four designated centers. These centers conduct basic and clinical studies, including the study of relevant retroviruses and retroviral diseases.

Atlanta, Georgia: Researchers here are working to further define the spectrum of HIV disease and develop new agents that could be effective against HIV and other associated infections. The research program is divided into four general categories: epidemiologic studies, clinical studies, outcome studies and basic research programs.

Director: David Rimland, M.D.
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Durham, North Carolina: Investigators at this Center are focusing on the molecular and cellular characterization of HIV and related pathogens. Basic science projects underway include vaccine development, studies of HIV gene regulation, investigations of virulence factors and identification of common opportunistic infections in HIV-infected persons. The Center also has active clinical programs in place to evaluate and care for HIV-infected veterans.

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New York, NY: Researchers are studying a variety of issues related to HIV infection and its resulting complications. For example, they are exploring serotyping the various subtypes of HIV, mechanisms of HIV neutralization, production and characterization of antibodies directed against HIV-1, HIV co-receptors, white blood cell function in HIV-infected patients, immune response to tuberculosis, development of early diagnostic tools for tuberculosis, various treatment regimens for HIV-infected patients, and development of a group of HIV at-risk subjects for use in intervention studies.

The Center also serves as a subsite for patient recruitment for a large multi-center National Institutes of Health study researching new drugs for treating AIDS and HIV.

Director: Michael Simberkoff, M.D.
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San Diego, CA: Researchers here are studying the molecular pathogenesis of HIV, as well as vaccines and chemotherapy. They were also involved in the initial development of AZT and other combination treatments.

Researchers made a significant finding which showed that latent strains of the HIV virus continue to hide within the immune system following drug therapy, despite the suppression of the virus to nearly undetectable levels. This is a finding that has serious implications in the search for a cure for the virus.

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Alcoholism

VA investigators at three designated research centers are conducting multidisciplinary research on the treatment and cessation of alcoholism. Here's a brief look at each activity:

Denver, Colorado: Here, researchers are attempting to identify the genes that play a role in the development of alcoholism and liver disease. The Center has two primary components in which such studies are carried out: a Basic Molecular Genetics Core and a Human Genetics Investigation Core.

The major thrust of the Center's research is the importance of genetic factors in alcoholism. A long-term study of college-aged men conducted by an investigator at the San Diego VA Medical Center, revealed that reduced sensitivity to alcohol was associated with a family history of alcoholism, and that reduced sensitivity around age 20, regardless of family history, was predictive of alcoholism at a later age. Researchers at the Center are focusing on identification of the genes responsible for sensitivity to alcohol.

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Omaha, Nebraska: This Center concentrates on the hypothesis that proteins modified by acetaldehyde binding are major factors in the development of liver disease. The Center organizes its alcohol research around four core laboratories: immunology, molecular biology, protein biochemistry and an ethanol ingestion facility.

Moreover, the Center's researchers have close ties to the Liver Study Unit at VAMC Omaha, providing a direct opportunity to connect the Alcohol Center's research with patient care.

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West Haven, Connecticut: VA investigators at this Center conduct research on the neurobiology, genetics, and pharmacology of alcoholism. The program is divided into five laboratories: molecular neuroscience, neuropharmacology, molecular genetics, neuroimaging, and medications development.

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Diabetes

The VA research effort on diabetes is just as expansive as the AIDS, alcoholism, and schizophrenia programs. Co-funded by Medical Research Service and the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation International, three centers focus on diabetes research. Investigators at these sites explore both type I and type II diabetes. Here's a glimpse of some of their work:

Iowa City, Iowa: This Center focuses on the effects of diabetes on the vascular system, since disorders of the vascular system are common among persons with type I or II diabetes, and stem from the blood vessels' inability to expand when necessary. Researchers use a multidisciplinary approach in order to identify potential causes of early vascular defects and design preventive or palliative therapies. Studies involve both human and animal subjects.

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Nashville, Tennessee: Biomedical researchers in Nashville are studying several aspects of diabetes: cellular and molecular processes by which intensive therapy reduces insulin resistance; the role of exercise in modulating the effectiveness of therapy; and the mechanisms responsible for defective low blood sugar regulation in diabetic patients. Researchers aim to find strategies to reduce the side effects of intensive therapy or exercise, such as low blood sugar, to enable patients to receive and benefit from therapy without suffering adverse consequences.

Director: Stephen N. Davis, M.D.
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San Diego, CA: Here, researchers explore the basic mechanisms of insulin action in order to better understand the causes of insulin resistance. Such resistance is thought to be the major metabolic abnormality that eventually leads to type II diabetes. They are also studying the basic causes of complications of the vascular system and the kidneys in diabetic patients.

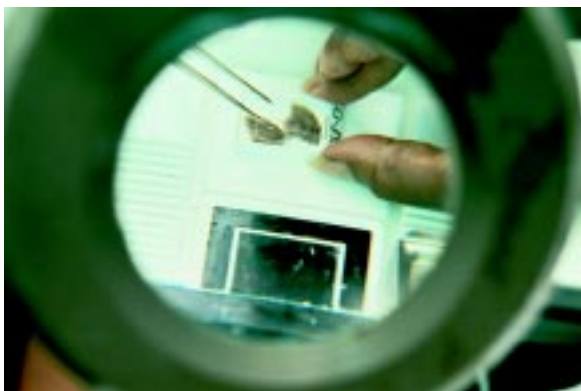
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Environmental Hazards

Designated Centers for the study of environmental hazards were established in 1994 as a major part of the VA's efforts to study the health of Persian Gulf veterans. The primary purpose of this research is to identify hazards encountered by veterans, evaluate the effects of exposure to these hazards, and identify factors which may explain symptoms resulting from the hazards. Here's a look at the work at each site:

Boston, Massachusetts: Research at this Center emphasizes behavioral toxicology, immunotoxicology, cancer epidemiology, and behavioral psychopathology. Specifically, research examines whether cognitive function deficits are associated with health complaints and hazardous environmental conditions reported by Persian Gulf veterans, and further evaluates the influence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a possible link to medical disorders. Another study evaluates neurological functioning in veterans suffering from PTSD and other environmental exposures.

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INVESTING IN
THE FUTURE
OF VETERANS'
HEALTH CARE

East Orange, New Jersey: Investigators here are carrying out a series of four research projects on the illness commonly referred to as Persian Gulf Syndrome. One of the four major components, an epidemiological survey, was designed to collect information on the environmental exposures of 2,800 Persian Gulf veterans in order to define illnesses and identify risk factors. Researchers also are studying genetic factors in the physiological response to stress.

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Portland, Oregon: Investigators at this Center are focusing on clinical evaluations of Gulf War veterans, including physical and neurological testing and evaluation for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), in an effort to assess the cause of illnesses that have no apparent medical explanation. Researchers are also studying veterans for signs of fibromyalgia, infections by the Leishmania parasite, and the effects of various drugs and toxins which troops may have encountered while in the Persian Gulf region.

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Louisville, Kentucky: Researchers in Louisville are assessing the effects of hazardous substances on reproductive capacity and developmental abnormalities. Their primary goals are to determine the level of exposure to chemicals encountered by veterans and to correlate such exposures with the development of disease or medical disorders.

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Innovation and Challenge: Rehabilitation and Development Service

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Technology that gives veterans back functional independence, career opportunities that encourage rehabilitation research education—all speak to just a small part of innovation in the Rehabilitation Research and Development (Rehab R&D) Service. An intramural program for improving the quality of life of impaired and disabled veterans, Rehab R&D is dedicated to the well-being of America's veterans through a full spectrum of research: from approved rehabilitation research projects, through evaluation and technology transfer to final clinical application. The veterans we serve not only help us define our research goals, but participate in research efforts, and often test the outcomes and ultimate usefulness of research results in their daily lives.

To advance this effort, VA funds six Rehabilitation R&D Centers of Excellence around the country,

each specializing in a specific research area. Here, investigators renew a half century of commitment to seeking solutions to rehabilitation's most challenging research problems. Moreover, in looking toward a new generation of researchers, a Research Career Development program has been initiated to mentor doctoral-level rehabilitation professionals. These men and women will help guide the future of rehabilitation research and development.

In order to disseminate research results, the Rehab R&D Service has committed to publishing its efforts, through outlets such as a quarterly peer-reviewed journal, an annual compendium of rehab research progress throughout the world, clinical monographs, and data sheets for technology transfer projects. Each of these activities stimulates new research ideas and keeps clinicians and consumers on the cutting edge of new ideas in disability management.



CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

The Rehab R&D Service's six Centers of Excellence, function as magnets to attract the best and brightest minds from academia, industry, and medicine into VA and focused on finding research solutions to the needs of veterans. Below are brief descriptions of each of the Centers.

CENTER FOR GERIATRIC REHABILITATION ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Researchers at the Atlanta Center work to improve the function, independence, and quality of life of veterans aging with disabilities. Much of their study explores understanding the mechanisms underlying disabilities associated with age and applying the findings to the design, testing, and evaluation of creative rehabilitative interventions. Specific focus areas include: vision, environment and behavior, and physical performance and exercise.

The Center is affiliated with Emory University and also has strong relationships with Georgia Tech and Georgia State. The center also networks nationally to identify promising postdoctoral and junior investigators interested in its research areas.

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CENTER FOR FUNCTIONAL ELECTRICAL STIMULATION CLEVELAND, OHIO

Functional Electrical Stimulation (FES), a technology that relies on controlled electrical current to activate paralyzed muscles, plays a critical role in returning full or partial physical function to disabled individuals. FES has made the transition from the bench to the bedside, with individuals who have lost function in their hands able to manipulate objects, who have lost function in their



legs able to stand and walk short distances, and who have lost control of their bowel and bladder regain active control. Populations who most stand to benefit from FES technology include those with Spinal cord injury and paralysis as a result of stroke.

Researchers at the Functional Electrical Stimulation Center of Excellence in Cleveland have made significant contributions to the advances of this technology. Part of an internationally recognized

consortium, the FES Center of Excellence works alongside other consortium members, which include the Cleveland VA Medical Center, Case Western Reserve University, MetroHealth Medical Center, and Edison BioTechnology Center.

Recent significant accomplishments of the Center include the FDA approval of a hand grasp system and commencement of clinical trials of an advanced bladder/bowel management system. Current key areas of activity include the clinical development of implantable command/control systems for bilateral hand grasp and implantable systems for transfer and mobility, as well as research activities in unassisted standing, upper arm control, and evaluation of FES therapies in the treatment of stroke-related impairments. The center also supports fellows and young investigators in establishing careers in the field.

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*CENTER FOR HEALTHY AGING WITH DISABILITIES
HOUSTON, TEXAS*

At this Center researchers explore how to eliminate preventable secondary problems and reduce risks for all secondary conditions related to disabilities.

The Center uses a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach that involves new clinical interventions to decrease the number of secondary complications in aging disabled veterans. Researchers have found that education programs aimed at the consumer, family caregiver, and general public convey strategies that are leading to more healthful lifestyles, increased independence, and a consequent increased quality of life for veterans.

The majority of the Center staff are members of the faculty of the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation of Baylor College of Medicine. The Center's investigators have a broad array of expertise and research interests, including fitness, nutrition, sexual function and mobility, and motor control. Serving their studies are motor and sensory laboratories, prosthetics shops, and a variety of biological laboratories.

The Center is also developing a database to capture information from veterans seen through the clinics and admitted for inpatient care. By collecting basic demographic, social, medical, and disability data on every veteran receiving clinic or inpatient care, the Center expects to better identify specific areas for further research and to provide subject information for research studies.

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*CENTER FOR MOBILITY
PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA*

Researchers at this Center are developing clinical treatments and technological devices for physically disabled veterans in an effort to increase their independence and improve their quality of life. The Center focuses on improving mobility in persons with neurologic or orthopedic impairments, specifically restoring and enhancing muscle coordination in persons who have had a stroke or have sustained a spinal cord injury (SCI), and on restoring and maintaining musculo-skeletal function and integrity in persons with osteoporosis, arthritis, or SCI. The Center also performs basic research to better understand the way in which the nervous system coordinates muscles during complex motor tasks, and the way in which bone grows, maintains, and regenerates itself.

The Center has a long-standing affiliation with Stanford University, particularly with the Departments of Mechanical Engineering—and its new Biomechanical Engineering Division—and Functional Restoration. In fact, all Center investigators have faculty/lecturer appointments in these departments, and graduate and undergraduate Stanford students are routinely involved in Center projects. Investigators also regularly collaborate with outside institutions in areas of relevance to the Center mission.

In the area of applied technology, Center researchers are investigating obstacle avoidance training with computer-simulated environments, the development of an assistive robot for effective health care delivery, and differential pressure walking assistance.

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*CENTER FOR REHABILITATIVE
AUDITORY RESEARCH
PORTLAND, OREGON*

Researchers at this site attempt to alleviate the communicative, social, and economic problems caused by auditory system impairment by conducting basic research and development, training investigators, and providing results to clinicians who assess and treat veterans with hearing loss and tinnitus.

While developments in programmable hearing aids are impressive, the technology has outpaced our knowledge of the effect of Sensori-neural hearing loss on the auditory system and speech recognition. Today's tests of speech recognition, for example, are poor predictors of speech perception in real life environments. The Center is addressing this problem using a multidisciplinary approach, including basic research that clarifies the effects of sensori-neural loss on frequency selectivity, temporal resolution, and localization; and applied research designed to provide new methods for assessing speech recognition tests. Other areas of study include the development of hearing aids and assistive devices, which will aid veterans with multisensory disabilities such as hearing loss and blindness.

The Center is currently affiliated with Portland State University, Oregon State University, and the Oregon Health Sciences University (OHSU), including the Departments of Otolaryngology and Neurology and the Oregon Hearing Research Center at the latter. Center staff also work closely with the VA Medical Centers at West Los Angeles, CA, Nashville, TN, and Albuquerque, NM to conduct clinical trials.

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*CENTER FOR AMPUTATION, PROSTHETICS,
LIMB LOSS PREVENTION
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON*

Investigators at this Center study amputation prevention, lower limb prosthetic improvement, and patient outcome measurements. They collaborate with the Departments of Orthopedics and Rehabilitation Medicine at the University of Washington, and the Prosthetics Research Study Group.

One of the first to routinely test aging veterans for diabetes—the leading cause of non-traumatic lower limb loss—this Center has long been a magnet for referrals of veterans with limb-at-risk and amputation-related problems. The Center works to build and nurture a community of clinical and basic scientists to pursue research objectives in the area of lower limb prosthetics and amputation. Overall, the Center measures functional outcomes of persons treated, tracks the results of innovation in terms of their positive impact on the lives of veterans, and disseminates the information discovered.

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A Call To Participate: New Initiatives and Funding Opportunities

VA sponsors one of the largest intramural research programs in the world. Each year VA funds numerous important research projects conducted by investigators among at least 115 VA facilities nationwide. Through its four services, VA's Office of Research and Development administers a variety of funding programs.

The majority of VA research projects result from proposals VA investigators initiate. Besides investigator-initiated projects, the Office of Research and Development frequently solicits proposals on critical research issues. These solicitations are broadly disseminated through the local VA Medical Center Research offices as well through the R&D Centers and are posted on the VA Research and Development web site (www.va.gov/resdev). All VA research proposals are peer-reviewed to ensure that funded projects meet the highest scientific standards.

VA research is conducted in any number of ways—with VA medical centers, in collaboration with other federal government agencies, with non-government organizations such as universities or pharmaceutical companies; or any combination of these. Although the specific administrative requirements vary by funding program, with few exceptions, investigators must be employed by the VA at least 5/8 of the time to be eligible to receive VA research funding.

INITIATIVES

The following is a list of current new initiatives. Although not exhaustive, these projects provide a snapshot of the range and depth of clinical and health care research within the VA Office of Research and Development:

R&D-WIDE

- **Parkinson's Disease and Related Neurodegenerative Disorders (such as Alzheimer's disease)**—A collaboration with the National Center for Human Genome Research, this research initiative will explore the genetic, epidemiological and clinical aspects of the disease.
- **Nursing Research Initiative**—The Nursing Research Initiative encourages nurse investigators to conduct independent research aimed at high priority, VA mission oriented areas of investigation.
- **Interdisciplinary Studies of Rehabilitation Outcomes**—This effort aims to produce new knowledge for improving the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of rehabilitation practices. Studies will address the outcomes of rehabilitation services that strive to optimize patient physical functioning, independence and quality of life.

COOPERATIVE STUDIES PROGRAM

- **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**
Research—This effort involves multi-site, randomized clinical trials to assess evidence of a specific effect of particular treatment strategies. Researchers also will study treatments of special subpopulations of patients (e.g., women, Gulf War veterans), treatments aimed at comorbid disorders in PTSD patients, and treatment effects.
- **Prostate Cancer**—Investigators will conduct multi-site, randomized clinical trials to gain insight into important potential therapies and health care services for prostate cancer patients.
- **Aging Research**—A collaboration with the National Institute on Aging (NIA), this initiative involves multi-site, randomized clinical trials to study a range of priority aging areas, from osteoporosis management in men and androgen replacement therapy in older men to studies of cardiovascular approaches in older patients and clinical models for chronic disease management of elderly patients.
- **Persian Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses**—Researchers will conduct multi-site, randomized clinical trials to evaluate proposed treatments of illnesses among Gulf War Veterans. Potential study areas include treatment trials for disorders such as chronic fatigue syndrome, post traumatic stress disorder and other Gulf War illnesses.

- **Diabetes Mellitus (Type II)**—Researchers will conduct multi-site, randomized clinical trials to evaluate the effectiveness of treatments, such as insulin therapy and foot ulcer treatments. They will also assess clinical management approaches, such as models of care for diabetic patients and implementation of diabetes care guidelines.

*HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH AND
DEVELOPMENT (HSR&D)*

- **Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI)**—QUERI is a bold new quality effort aimed at translating research discoveries and innovations into patient care and systems improvement. It is a comprehensive, data-driven, outcomes based, quality improvement program for use in all areas of VHA medical care—from inpatient and outpatient care to long term care. The 10 high volume and/or high risk priority disease areas to be studied are: ischemic heart disease, diabetes, congestive heart failure, stroke, depression, substance abuse, spinal cord injury, HIV/AIDS, colon cancer and prostate disease.



- **Patient Safety and Prevention of Adverse Events**—This initiative focuses on improving health care quality and outcomes by identifying and preventing avoidable, adverse events, and working to understand their causes and ways to reduce or eliminate them.
- **Managing Access to Improve Outcomes**—This initiative encompasses a variety of studies on the effects of decisions and programs undertaken to alter veterans' access to health care services.
- **The Interface of Managed Care and Primary Care**—This effort invites research that addresses timely questions about how VHA's movement toward managed care affects important patient and systems outcomes.
- **Implementation of Evidence-Based Clinical Practice Guidelines**—This initiative invites research to evaluate alternative strategies for implementing evidence-based clinical practice guidelines in VHA health care and to identify strategies that may be replicated VA-wide.
- **Understanding Ethnic and Cultural Variations in the Delivery of VA Health Services**—Ethnic and cultural variations in health care have been documented in Veteran, Medicare, and general populations, but few studies have gone beyond simple identification of such variations. This solicitation encourages proposals that employ innovative research methods and instruments for analyzing and evaluating ethnic and cultural variations in the delivery of health care, and that result in implementation of plans for effective interventions.

- **Gender Differences in Health Care and Improving Health Services for Women Veterans**—Since the Women Veterans Health Program Act of 1992, health issues specific to women veterans have been targeted for VHA research. This HSR&D initiative seeks proposals that explore gender differences in veterans health care or investigate problems identified in non-veteran female populations that have not been studied among female veterans.



- **Patient Centered Care**—This initiative will define and assess patients' expectations for VA health services. Proposed studies will focus on one or more of the following dimensions of patient centered care: respect for patients' preferences, coordination of care, information and education, physical comfort, emotional support, involvement of family and friends and continuity of care.
- **Developmental Project Programs in Health Services Research**—This effort provides venture capital, or seed money, to investigators to explore innovative approaches and/or creative methods for resolving problems that have direct relevance to VA's clinical mission.

- **VA Costs, Cost-Effectiveness and Health Economics**—This initiative supports research to improve the capacity of VA to determine the cost of health care, undertake cost-effectiveness research, and conduct economic analysis of health care. A special focus is on studies that will improve the methods for determining VA health care costs, and that validate and compare cost finding methods and projects in an effort to develop VA expertise in cost-effectiveness analysis.
- **VA Economic Analysis Support Center**—Staff will provide leadership and an infrastructure in support of VA cost-effectiveness research, and advocate on behalf of the VA research community in cost-related information systems issues.
- **Telemedicine Research**—This effort will support systematic evaluations of telemedicine applications in the Veterans Health Administration, help identify useful and exportable telemedicine applications, and identify cross-cutting principles that determine the value of such applications.



MEDICAL RESEARCH SERVICE

- **Medical Research Merit Review Entry Program**—This initiative aims to increase the possibilities for young investigators to enter the VA research program by allowing them to compete in a separate pool for funding and work with a VA scientist as their mentor.
- **Research Enhancement Award Program (REAP)**—REAP will promote and support groups of VA investigators (minimum of 4) in programs that address specific medical problems of veterans, such as: cancer; dementia and neuronal degeneration; vascular diseases, including stroke and cardiovascular disease; chronic lung diseases; renal disease; major depression; spinal cord disorders; degenerative diseases of bones and joints; trauma and wound healing; and immunological disorders.
- **VA/DoD Collaborative Research Program on Physiological Foundations of Physical Performance and Readiness**—This effort encourages studies on the physiological basis of physical performance and combat readiness.
- **VA/DoD Collaborative Research Program on Prostate Diseases Including Cancer**—This initiative encourages studies that gather fundamental information about the disease processes in order to advance diagnosis and treatment capabilities for these diseases.
- **VA/Paralyzed Veterans of America Cooperative Funding Agreement**—This effort targets spinal cord injury research.

Forging Our Future: Career Development Opportunities



One of VA Research's greatest strengths is the high caliber of its investigators. Nurturing and supporting the development of investigators in the early, mid, and advanced stages of their careers is therefore a high priority within the OR&D. Career development awards for clinicians, research career scientist awards for non-clinicians, as well as mentoring and training opportunities are available in the Health Services, Medical and Rehabilitation research services. These awards provide salary support for investigators so they have protected time to pursue their research or specific training to enhance their research skills. For information on application procedures for career development opportunities, please contact:

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General Information

Providing veterans, investigators, potential investigators, policy makers and all other constituents with timely and accurate information about VA research is a high priority of the Office of Research and Development. To support that effort, we have created several dissemination options:

VA Research and Development Web Page

We are continually updating and adding information to our web page making the most current research information available to the research community and general public. Several important R&D publications, reports, and research funding information are currently available. Visit us at www.va.gov/resdev.

Fax-on-Demand System

Within HSR&D's Information Dissemination Program, we have built a fax-on-demand system through which a variety of products and reports are available via fax. Simply dial (617) 278-4492 or FTS (700) 839-4492 and follow the voice prompts.

For general information about the Office of Research and Development or for information regarding any of the specific Research Services please contact the following offices:

Office of Research and Development
Phone: (202) 273-8284 FAX: (202) 273-6526

Cooperative Studies Program
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Health Services Research and Development Service
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Medical Research Service
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Rehabilitation Research and Development Service
Phone: (202) 273-8238 FAX: (202) 273-6514



A Message of Thanks to Veterans

High quality health care research in VA is possible because of the cooperation of thousands of veteran patients. Their partnership with VA investigators allows us to do research that contributes to the health of veterans and the community at large. We are deeply grateful to all veterans who currently or who have in the past participated in our studies.

CREDITS

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INVESTING IN
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THE FUTURE
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OF VETERANS'
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
HEALTH CARE

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CATALOG

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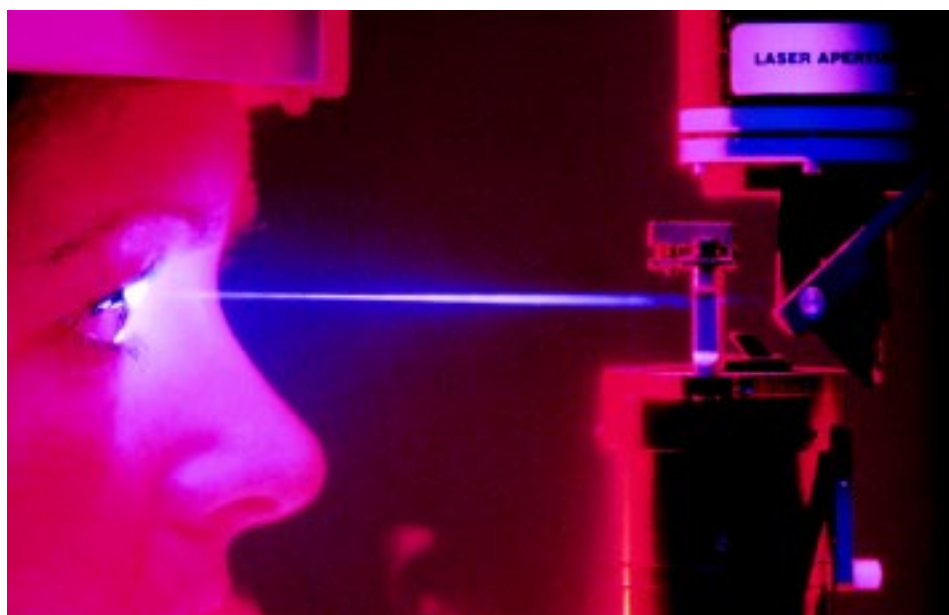
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